Becoming Digitally Ready
a Manual for Aged Care Services

eldac.com.au

Introduction

Innovative digital technologies are transforming healthcare service delivery, and there is a push to enhance current practices in aged care by applying effective digital solutions. The implementation of digital technology has been identified as foundational to the broader aged care reform agenda, with the Aged Care Royal Commission recommending that the sector would benefit from advancements in Information and Communications Technology (ICT)[1]. As work continues at the systems level to address structural barriers to change, opportunities currently exist across the aged care sector to embrace strong leadership and foresight around digital technology to ensure that organisations and the workforce are prepared to meet requirements in the future.

Digital health technology, when implemented effectively, can support workflow optimisation, and improve the quality of care for consumers, enabling organisations to move toward a more proactive approach to service delivery[2]. As palliative care and care at the end of life are a core part of aged care practice, it is also timely for the sector to consider how technology can be leveraged to support care at the end of life practices.

The End of Life Directions for Aged Care (ELDAC) project has created various evidence-based digital tools to support the aged care sector make the best of technology to enhance care at the end of life. In addition to building palliative care knowledge and skills, making use of these innovative resources can help build a digitally aware workforce.

This booklet references technology applications developed by the ELDAC Technology and Innovation team and the broader ELDAC project. All are practical and evidence-based solutions to support your service. It considers how technology can be used at all levels of the organisation to improve the quality of care at end of life and contribute to meeting reporting requirements outlined in the Aged Care Quality Standards.

The diagram below outlines the impact of implementing digital tools across your service to support quality care at the end of life.

Technology and Innovation across the Aged Care Service

- 🟠 **Consumer** — Digital Tools to support high quality palliative care for consumers
- 🟣 **Workforce** — Technology to build workforce capacity in the provision of quality care at end of life
- 🔴 **Organisation** — Optimise IT systems and use digital tools to help your service support care at end of life
- 🟢 **Governance** — Lead the organisation in designing a digital strategy that supports policy, governance frameworks, and best practice for care at the end of life

[1] Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. (2021). Final Report- Volume 1: Summary and Recommendations. https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/

[2] Socha-Dietrich, K. (2021). Empowering the health workforce to make the most of the digital revolution, OECD Health Working Papers, No. 129, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/37ff0eaa-en.

Three steps to digital readiness

The three key steps outlined in this booklet demonstrate how advances in digital health can be incorporated to support care at the end of life. Adopting new technology should lead to an improvement in current practices while preserving the quality and cultural safety of care. When selecting digital tools, it is important to consider the impact that new technology will have on the workforce, organisation, and consumers.

Step one involves assessing the digital maturity of your organisation.

Step two outlines innovative and evidence-based solutions developed by ELDAC to address common digital challenges.

Step three includes a technology consideration checklist to aid services when researching new technologies and communicating with IT vendors.

> advances in digital health can be incorporated to support care at end of life

Step One: Assess Digital Maturity
Assess the needs of the organisation to prioritise the application of digital solutions

Step Two: Adopt Digital Tools
Adopt ELDAC tools to address digital challenges, to support the workforce, organisation and governance

Step Three: Use Technology Considerations Checklist
Use the checklist to review digital tools and facilitate conversations with vendors

Step One: Assess Digital Maturity

Assessing digital maturity and readiness to change will help managers prioritise needs and plan for the successful and sustainable adoption of digital tools. It is important to prepare your service for changes, as projects initiated will work better with commitment from management. Engaging the team early, involving them in the conversation and raising awareness of how digital tools have the potential to address common challenges will ideally result in buy-in from staff.

Changes to your current practice do not need to happen overnight; consider a long-term digital health strategy that you will work towards in small incremental steps to avoid feeling overwhelmed.

One of the initial steps you can take is to conduct a digital maturity assessment. This will help you review your current digital practices and think about how your staff use digital technology. It may highlight ways in which you can leverage existing technologies such as your Clinical Data Management System (CDMS). In addition, this process may also help identify opportunities to adopt new technology and build digital capacity of staff. Examples of evidenced-based technology solutions developed by ELDAC are outlined in Step Two: Adopting Digital Tools.

There are many free assessments available online, such as the South Australian Government Digital Maturity Assessment Tool. This tool has been designed to help organisations review digital maturity and identify areas for improvement.
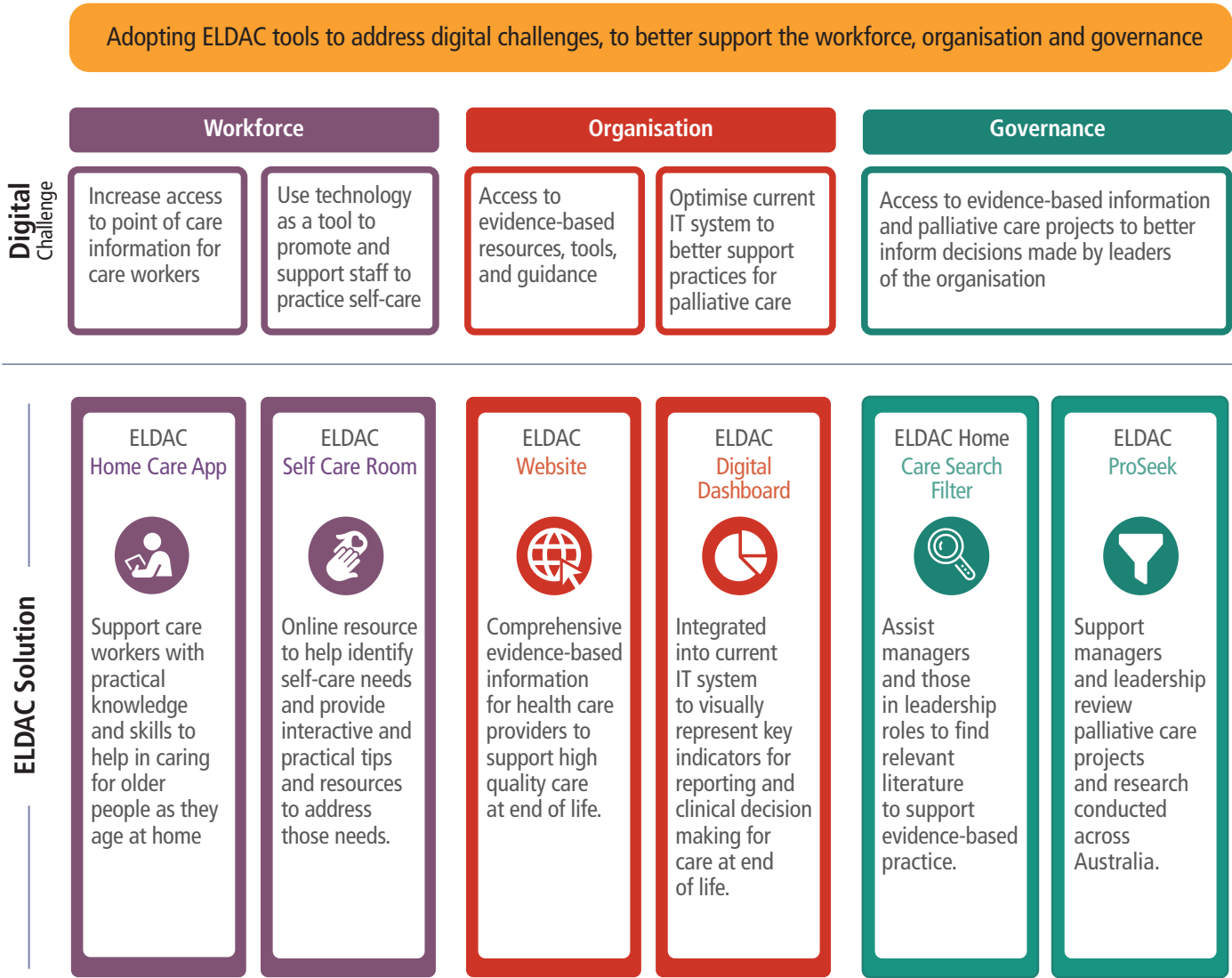
> "Digital maturity is the extent to which health services are supported by the effective use of digital technologies."
> Australian Digital Health Agency, Australian Government.

Step Two: Adopting Digital Tools

This section demonstrates how your service can make use of existing resources to enhance your service's digital capability. ELDAC has developed digital health tools to address common challenges at the workforce, organisation, and governance levels.

How Technology and Innovation can Support Aged Care Services

Adopting ELDAC tools to address digital challenges, to better support the workforce, organisation and governance

	Workforce		Organisation		Governance	
Digital Challenge	Increase access to point of care information for care workers	Use technology as a tool to promote and support staff to practice self-care	Access to evidence-based resources, tools, and guidance	Optimise current IT system to better support practices for palliative care	Access to evidence-based information and palliative care projects to better inform decisions made by leaders of the organisation	
ELDAC Solution	**ELDAC** Home Care App — Support care workers with practical knowledge and skills to help in caring for older people as they age at home	**ELDAC** Self Care Room — Online resource to help identify self-care needs and provide interactive and practical tips and resources to address those needs.	**ELDAC** Website — Comprehensive evidence-based information for health care providers to support high quality care at end of life.	**ELDAC** Digital Dashboard — Integrated into current IT system to visually represent key indicators for reporting and clinical decision making for care at end of life.	**ELDAC** Home Care Search Filter — Assist managers and those in leadership roles to find relevant literature to support evidence-based practice.	**ELDAC** ProSeek — Support managers and leadership review palliative care projects and research conducted across Australia.

Workforce

ELDAC has developed two solutions to assist aged care workers with self-care and access to evidence-based resources. These digital health tools can support and build your workforce's capacity to provide quality care at the end of life.

Assist care workers when they need it most [Home Care app]

> **Increase access to point-of-care information for care workers**

Apps are an easy way to introduce familiar technology into practice, and can be used to help workers stay connected to knowledge and resources wherever they are using their phone. The ELDAC Home Care App supports care workers with practical knowledge and skills to help care for older people as they age at home. It provides comprehensive evidence-based point of care information relevant to end of life and palliative care. Content included is relevant to scope of practice and has been developed following extensive consultation with care workers, care worker coordinators, home care managers, and academic experts.

ELDAC Home Care App

Steps to Implement

1. Promote free Home Care App to care workers and provide information on how to use it.
2. Identify opportunities to promote ongoing use of the app within your existing organisational practices, such as staff meetings and debrief sessions.
3. Increase accessibility to the Home Care App by working with your IT team to integrate the app within the organisation's intranet/work devices.

Extra Support:
Please contact the ELDAC Team for Home Care App resources. Free information sessions outlining how to enchance the use of the app are available to services that join the ELDAC Technology Network.

Take Care [Self-Care Room]

ELDAC, in collaboration with aged care workers and experts, have developed the Self-Care Room, an innovative online resource that supports the practice of self-care for individuals and organisations. Web based resources can increase accessibility to information and tools that support self-care. Staff can assess their self-care needs, create self-care plans, and access information using the Self-Care Room. Promoting the Self-Care Room can help your organisation address stress and burnout, ideally minimising staff turnover.

> **Use technology as a tool to promote and support staff to practice self-care**

ELDAC Self-Care Room

Steps to Implement

1. Promote self-care; tell your staff about the ELDAC Self-Care Room and encourage its use.
2. Include the Self-Care Room within your current practices and regular self-care processes. For example, discuss some of the Self-Care Room content during a staff meeting (or debrief) to facilitate discussion.
3. Join the ELDAC Technology Network to access free information sessions on utilising the Self-Care Room.

Organisation

Managers can lead the way, taking positive steps toward building the digital health capacity of the organisation. Websites can expand knowledge and digital tools can support busy staff with reminders and reports. The ELDAC website is a great place to start, and the Digital Dashboard is a powerful tool that can be integrated into your current IT system to improve workflow efficiency and support reporting requirements and quality care at the end of life.

ELDAC Website

Encourage leadership and staff to utilise the ELDAC website as a tool to access evidence-based information for palliative care and advanced care planning.

www.eldac.com.au

ELDAC website

> **Access to evidence-based resources, tools, and guidance**

The ELDAC website is a great resource for those in leadership roles to access evidence-based information to support palliative care and advance care planning to improve the care of older Australians. Resources are available 24/7 and cover many topics, for example:

- The interactive Personal Learning Assessment (PLA) and Personal Learning Plan forms that have been created to assist you in identifying and document learning and development priorities.
- After Death Audit, an interactive form that will be redeveloped as an interactive database in early 2023.

ELDAC
End of Life Directions for Aged Care

| Home | Toolkits | Service Development | Technology and Innovation | My Care Matters | Resources | Newsroom | About ELDAC |

ELDAC provides information, guidance, and resources to health professionals and aged care workers to support palliative care and advance care planning to improve the care of older Australians.

Visit our Self-Care Room for free resources for aged care.

find out more

Organisation

Get the most out of your IT system [Digital Dashboard]

ELDAC has developed an evidence-based Digital Dashboard to support your service proactively address palliative care needs for clients and residents.

It utilises the comprehensive clinical and care records maintained in your service's IT system to visually track key end of life care processes for reporting and clinical decision making.

> Optimise current IT system to better support practices for palliative care

The Digital Dashboard aims to:

- Support a consistent and comprehensive approach to end of life
- Show what is happening (client level, manager level, organisation level)
- Provide triggers and flags for care prompts
- Assist in reporting and/or benchmarking.

Digital Dashboard

Steps to Implement

1. Contact the ELDAC project requesting a digital demonstration of the dashboard to check out the full protype. You can also request the Dashboard info pack so you can share it within your team or service's leadership group.
2. Discuss integrating the ELDAC digital dashboard with your service's leadership team or the board.
3. Consider integration options.
   - The easiest way to integrate is working with your in-house IT team to do a mid-layer integration using a software such as PowerBI.
   - Or, you can negotiate with your clinical IT system provider so they can integrate it for you.
4. Request the Dashboard integration package from ELDAC and commence integration!

Things to Know:

ELDAC will provide the Dashboard integration package free of charge.

A guide document to help implement the Dashboard at your service level will be provided post integration.

Governance

Those in leadership roles can commit to digital transformation and create a vision for the use of digital technology at their service. Additionally, technology can be used to support these decisions, providing access to up-to-date information to help shape evidence-based policies, clinical guidelines, and frameworks.

Digital Research Tools [Home Care Search Filter and ProSeek]

Managers and leaders in aged care are expected to have knowledge of current policies, projects, evidence, guidelines, and tools. Many of these resources are housed online and accessing this information can be time-consuming.

> Access to research and projects on palliative care and aged care

ELDAC has created two tools that are designed to support you:

- Home Care Search Filter
- ProSeek (Palliative Care Projects Database).

ELDAC Digital Research Tools

Home Care Search Filter

Find research evidence relating to Home Care in PubMed databse with one-click!

ProSeek (Palliative Care Projects Database)

Find palliative care and aged care projects across Australia.

You may like to submit a project to the database!

Step Three: Technology Considerations

Digital technologies will continue to evolve, transforming the aged care sector. With an ever-increasing number of digital tools and platforms available, those in leadership roles may feel overwhelmed when it comes to making decisions about adopting digital health tools.

The Technology Considerations Checklist outlined on the following page has been designed to assist you when researching digital tools and can act as a prompt to facilitate conversations with potential vendors. As each organisation and its IT needs are unique, selecting topics relevant to your organisation is recommended. Your requirements may differ from those outlined in the checklist and should also be considered.

In addition to the Technology Consideration Checklist there are many helpful resources available to support your organisation assess potential digital health solutions such as:

- Aged Care Industry Information Technology Council
- Australasian Institute of Digital Health
- Australian Digital Health Agency
- Officer of the Australian Information Commissioner (Australian Privacy Principles).

The Technology Consideration Checklist on page 11 is designed to help you research digital health tools

Technology Considerations Checklist

Cost and licensing structure	$	
What is the initial cost for the solution? • What is included? • How are licensing costs structured? E.g., pay per user/ device? Is there a limit to the number of users? Can you transfer licenses?	(record $)	
Are there ongoing costs associated with the solution (e.g, software updates, maintenance, customisation)?	(record $)	

Privacy and Security	Yes	No
Does the vendor have appropriate privacy and security protocols in place and comply with relevant privacy and security legislation such as the Privacy Act 1988, Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and relevant Federal, and State and Territory legislation?		

Data Management and Storage	Yes	No
Can the vendor supply information and documentation outlining where and how data will be stored (e.g., are servers located in Australia?) and how long for? Does this comply with relevant privacy and security legislation?		

Data Backup	Yes	No
Can the vendor supply information about the backing up of your data and how frequently this occurs?		

Integration	Yes	No
Does the product integrate with current IT systems in use e.g., your organisation's Clinical Data Management System? If yes, what is the process?		

Ease of use and training	Yes	No
Can the vendor outline how easy the tool is to use and the level of digital literacy required?		
Does the vendor offer training for staff?		

Process	Yes	No
Can the vendor outline the process of what is involved in developing and implementing the digital health tool into practice? Can they provide you with an estimate of how long it will take?		

Vendor support, updates, and troubleshooting	Yes	No
Does the vendor offer ongoing maintenance, updates, and support services if there are any issues with the solution?		
Can the vendor provide you with information on how issues with the solution are handled and the turnaround time for providing support?		

Functionality and device compatibility	Yes	No
Is the solution accessible on different devices (desktop, mobile, tablet) and with both iOS and android?		
Will the solution be impacted if there are connectivity issues? / Is the solution functional offline?		

Features	Yes	No
Is the solution turnkey?		
Can it be customised? (if yes, ask about costs associated with customization)		
Can you customise the technology over time as the needs of your organisation evolve?		

Experience + References (testimonials)	Yes	No
Has the vendor worked with aged care or palliative care services before? If yes, can they provide you with examples of successful implementation of their tool in a similar environment?		

ELDAC Technology Network

Scan QR code to register for the ELDAC Technology Network
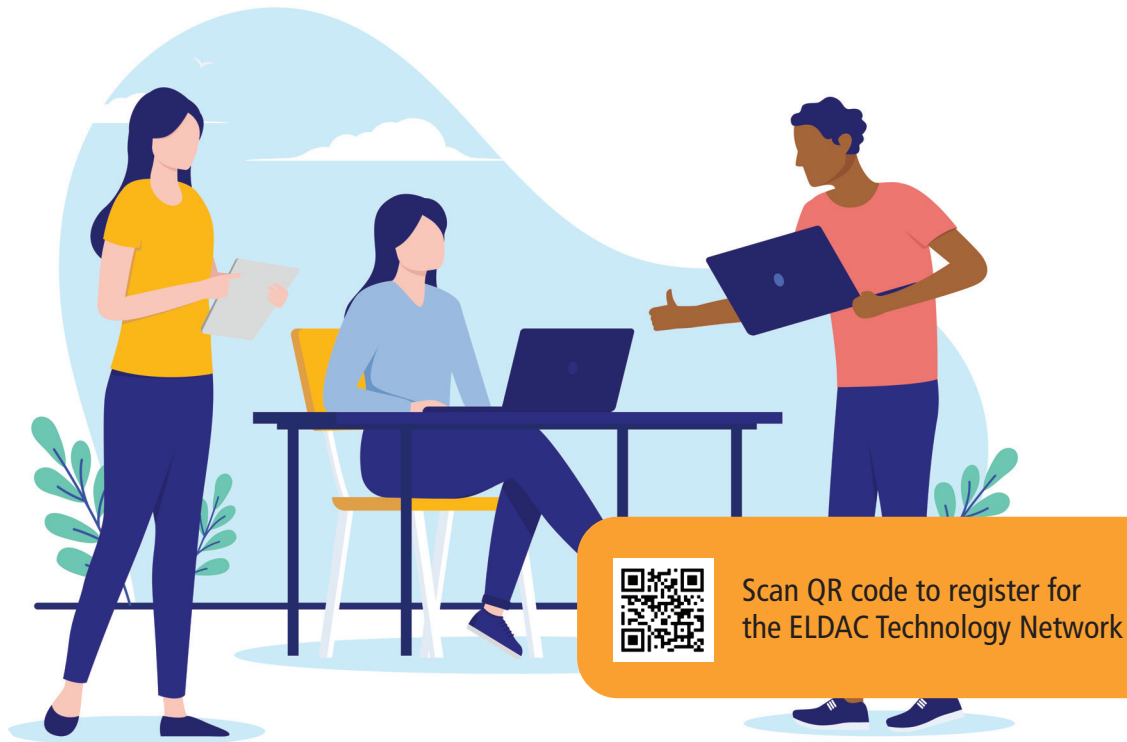
Get Involved

As part of this network you will be invited to events and enjoy opportunities to connect with other Aged Care Services.

Benefits:

- Access to webinars
- Opportunities to connect and exchange information and knowledge
- Learn more about innovation and technology in Aged Care